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ABSTRACT

This report of a conference on educational policies, patterns, and programs in the South summarizes the opinions presented by each major speaker. The following topics were discussed: (1) the continuing necessity of extending educational opportunity to all; (2) the signs of an emerging crisis--the growing number of disadvantaged children and an increase in the degree of poverty--and the need for successful intervention models; (3) issues in school finance: changing patterns of inequality (growing disparity between urban and rural, rich and poor students); (4) keys to effective educational leadership; (5) the need for workable federal programs; (6) the impact of changing standards on students in disadvantaged districts; (7) building constituencies to support public education; (8) educational imperatives in the New South; and (9) schools and social issues. The general conclusion of the conference was that the nation's recent call for excellence in education has had the greatest impact on the urban and rural schools of the South. Pressured to meet new educational mandates, adapt to changing demographics and technologies, and respond to a host of emerging social issues, many rural and inner-city schools are struggling to cross a widening gulf that separates them from more affluent suburban counterparts. A list of conference attendees is included. (KH)

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Education in a Changing South: New Policies, Patterns and Programs

REPORT ON THE CONTINUING CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the Southern Education Foundation, Inc.

Current Themes in Rural and Urban Education

November 19-20, 1986
Atlanta, Georgia

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The Southern Education Foundation expresses its gratitude to the individuals who helped in planning and implementing the 1986 Continuing Conference. We are especially indebted to a Conference planning committee consisting of Cynthia Brown, Ruby Martin, and Stuart Rosenfeld; and to Mary Armstrong of the SEF staff for her efforts in coordinating this event. SEF is also grateful to the Lilly Endowment, the Ford Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation for their assistance in funding the 1986 Conference, and to all those individuals who took time out from busy schedules to participate in two days of discussions.

Harvey Pressman served as conference rapporteur.

INTRODUCTION

In October, 1983, the Southern Education Foundation (SEF), convened the first session of its annual Continuing Conference, with a theme of "Education in a Changing South: New Policies, Patterns and Programs." The Continuing Conference serves to identify emerging trends and suggest public policies to address those trends, especially where they affect issues of equity in education.

SEF views the Conference as more of a consultation than a convention, designed to bring together people who will examine quality and equity in Southern education. We hope that the Conference as it has evolved over the years remains an effective forum, not only for sharing ideas and advocating strategies, but also serving as a springboard to encourage people and organizations to act on issues. The 1986 theme, focusing on rural and urban education in the South, enables us to consider current concerns and their implications for Southerners.

Elridge W. McMillan
President
Southern Education Foundation

Robert A. Kronley
Senior Consultant
Southern Education Foundation

A REGION DIVIDED: THE NECESSITY OF EXTENDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO ALL

Former Mississippi Governor William Winter set the tone for the 1986 Continuing Conference with a keynote address that stressed the growing interdependence of people in the South — rural and urban, black and white, poor and rich — in an increasingly competitive global economy. The South cannot stand, much less achieve its maximum potential, he asserted, "if we are permanently divided into two groups of people — one thriving, prospering, enjoying the good life that comes from quality education and social privilege — and the other struggling to survive, locked into an existence limited by ignorance, poverty and misery."

As far as we have come, said Mr. Winter, Chairman of the 1986 Commission on the Future of the South, we still have a long way to go in *both* achieving basic levels of quality in education *and* producing the results we need among the region's have-nots. "The very children most in need of the benefits of a beefed-up educational system are in too many instances the ones who are missing out," he noted. "They are the children of the poor, the rural areas, the inner cities — the 'children at risk'."

Mr. Winter insisted that we must provide better educational opportunities for these children not just because it is right, but because it is essential to our economic health as a region and nation. "Mississippians are no longer vying for their livelihood just with our neighbors in Alabama," he said. "This is a never-ending world-wide effort, and we cannot compete effectively with other nations when 20 percent of our adult population — and perhaps more — are functionally illiterate, when our national dropout rate is 30 percent, and when — in the South — it is a lot higher than that."

One measure of recent progress, Mr. Winter pointed out, is that "it is no longer necessary to convince the public or the policymakers of the importance of education to economic growth." But he warned that it is going to get more difficult and more expensive to maintain the momentum and commitment already established in the South. "We cannot afford *not* to make the necessary investment," he said. "After seeing the locust plague of ignorance consume our inheritance, the time has come in our region to do whatever is necessary to break this cycle of educational neglect based on misplaced priorities."

Nowhere is the disparity that exists within the South more dramatically reflected than in the differences that exist in the quality and level of funding for education, Mr. Winter said. "We must realize that we can no longer live in enclaves where we wall ourselves in from scenes we do not like to look at, that we can only prosper together, and that we must resolve to make effective education the bond that welds us together."

William Winter

"We cannot compete effectively with other nations when 20 percent of our adult population — and perhaps more —are functionally illiterate, when our national drop-out rate is 30 percent, and when —in the South — it is a lot higher than that."

WILLIAM F. WINTER

BROAD SIGNS OF AN EMERGING CRISIS

Many of the participants in the Continuing Conference are involved in day-to-day efforts to improve educational opportunities for poor, disadvantaged and minority children and youth. They sometimes lack the time or resources to keep track of larger demographics and economic trends that can ultimately make an impact on problems they will confront in the future.

Stanford University Professor Henry Levin, a specialist in the economics of education, provided the Conference with disquieting evidence of these trends: the changing nature of the educationally disadvantaged population of the 1980s, the relatively marginal effect of even the more successful efforts to improve the academic performance of this group, and the realization that problems of disadvantaged students may be growing. He also explained the likely failure of most current reform and remediation efforts, and described an "accelerated" elementary school model.

"The situation has changed very substantially since the 1960s," Dr. Levin said. "The number of educationally disadvantaged young people in America is larger than it used to be, and it has been increasing more rapidly in recent years. The educationally disadvantaged now constitute about 30 percent of elementary and secondary enrollments, a far higher proportion than in the 1960s. In certain states — like Texas — they will account for the majority of enrollment during the next decade."

Henry Levin

"Unless the achievement gap between the disadvantaged and their non-disadvantaged counterparts can be closed prior to secondary school, higher standards further discourage the disadvantaged rather than improve their performance."

HENRY LEVIN

The Changing Nature of the Problem

A "major crisis" thus looms before us, Dr. Levin warned, both because of the growth in the number of the disadvantaged and because of a significant increase in the *degree* of disadvantage among this group. In terms of income, the distance from the poverty line is greater than it used to be for many of the students in this group. In addition, Dr. Levin said, the United States is experiencing a wave of "documented immigration" that is unprecedented since the turn of the century, as well as a huge influx of undocumented immigrants. Most of these immigrants come from rural and impoverished circumstances where little schooling was provided, producing high rates of illiteracy among the parents of these new students and greater academic achievement gaps when they enter school. The size of the problem is continuing to grow, both because of these waves of immigration, and because of the "far higher birthrates" among disadvantaged populations than among other sub-groups.

The problem is made increasingly difficult because, despite many "successful" demonstrations conducted over the past two decades, and despite the availability of research on "what works" with many of these groups, no successful means to deal with the problems of the educationally disadvantaged are yet in place. What successes we have had have been exceedingly modest relative to the achievement gap that exists. While each of the instructional interventions that have proven promising (e.g. peer tutoring, preschool programs, "mastery" learning, and computer-assisted instruction) might help raise achievement levels, for example, from the 15th to the 20th percentile, gains of this magnitude do not provide sufficient improvement to make a significant impact on future success.

Changes in the Political Climate

What has changed since the 1960s is the lack of political attention given the educationally disadvantaged. Although the "rhetoric" of recent state reforms stresses educational improvement for all children, including the disadvantaged, the substance of the reforms does not support this emphasis. (South Carolina, Professor Levin agreed, is an all-too-rare exception.) In most state educational reform efforts, the educationally disadvantaged are systematically neglected.

These reforms, for example, stress raising standards at the secondary level, and usually do not provide additional resources or new strategies to assist the disadvantaged in meeting the higher standards. However, all the evidence suggests that any strategy to improve the educational plight of the disadvantaged must begin at the elementary level and must be dedicated to preparing children to do high quality work in secondary schools.

The current wave of reforms may in fact be serving as an obstacle for improving the education of the disadvantaged, Dr. Levin said. Raising standards at the secondary level without making it possible for the disadvantaged to meet the new standards may encourage them to drop out. "Unless the achievement gap between the disadvantaged and their non-disadvantaged counterparts can be closed *prior* to secondary school, higher standards further discourage the disadvantaged rather than improve their performance," Dr. Levin said.

The Trouble with Remediation

Progress in improving education of the disadvantaged is limited, Professor Levin argued, "by the very way in which we think about and address the problem." He asserts that existing models of intervention assume that disadvantaged students will not be able to maintain a normal instructional pace, that remedial services will close the learning gap, and that no timetable is required. These assumptions inevitably produce a number of undesirable consequences:

- The process reduces expectations by both children and their teachers.

- The lower expectations stigmatize both groups (children and teachers) with a label of inferiority.
- The stigma contributes to weak social support for the activity, low social status for the participants, and negative self-image for both the students and teachers engaged in remediation.
- Since students in remedial situations are expected to progress at a slower than "normal" pace, a self-fulfilling prophecy is realized as they fall farther and farther behind.
- Deliberately slowing the pace of instruction "to a crawl" usually also places a heavy emphasis on endless repetition through drill and practice, producing a joyless school experience.
- Such a joyless experience further negates the child's educational experience and diminishes the possibility that the child will view the school as a positive environment in which progress can be made.

Necessary Ingredients of an Effective Approach

Twenty years of experience have shown some instructional interventions which do promise modest improvements in the achievement of the disadvantaged. Since these successes have been marginal relative to the achievement gap, educators must find ways to make more substantial improvements. Dr. Levin listed some needed ingredients of a higher-impact approach:

- An effective approach must focus on creating learning activities characterized by high expectations and status for the participants.
- A successful program must set a deadline for closing the achievement gap so that ultimately educationally disadvantaged children will be able to perform competitively in the context of "mainstream instruction."
- An effective curriculum must not only be faster-paced, but must actively engage the children's interests.
- The implementation of successful education programs for the educationally disadvantaged will require the involvement of parents and the extensive participation of teachers in performing the programs.

The "Accelerated School" as a Transitional Strategy

Successful educational intervention must be designed to close the achievement gap so students eventually can benefit from regular instruction. To demonstrate how to meet these goals, Dr. Levin and a group of Stanford colleagues are designing a program of accelerated schools for the disadvantaged.

The accelerated school is a transitional elementary school designed to bring disadvantaged students up to grade level by the completion of sixth grade. It is also designed to be a dropout prevention program, by eliminating "the most important single cause of dropping out" — serious achievement deficits.

The goal of the entire operation of the accelerated school will be to bring children up to grade level, rather than limiting intervention for the disadvantaged to "pull-out" sessions in a school whose "dominant agenda" addresses other goals. Periodic standardized achievement tests — as well as tailored assessments created by school staff for each strand of the curriculum — will enable the staff to track the extent to which each child is meeting his or her goals.

Rather than grafting compensatory or remedial classes on the tradi-

tional elementary school, the designers of the accelerated school are trying to develop an institution capable of meeting the needs of the disadvantaged. The Stanford group will assist by providing information, technical assistance, and help in initiating the school-based governance model, but each school will establish a program that is consonant with the strengths upon which it may draw.

The Stanford group is working in San Francisco and Redwood City, planning programs that will begin in the fall of 1987. The group is also developing a full information clearinghouse on the accelerated school, training programs for staff, and an assessment model.

The Stanford group believes the accelerated school approach to be practical, because it can in large measure be implemented within existing financial constraints (including categorical grants from federal and state governments) and does not require legislation at either state or federal levels.

Stuart Rosenfeld

The Distasteful Consequences of Neglect

Dr. Levin stressed that unless we take a bold stand now to intervene on behalf of the disadvantaged, we "will soon be reaping the distasteful harvest of our own neglect." Among the potential dangers are the emergence of a dual society with a large and poorly educated underclass; "massive disruption" in higher education, especially among public institutions that will have to become either more restrictive in admissions or more remedial in their academic approach; reduced economic competitiveness of the nation, especially of certain states and regions with the "lowest quality" labor force (i.e. the highest incidence of educational disadvantage); higher costs for public services that are needed as a response to poverty; resulting pressures on the middle class to pay higher taxes (at the same time that incomes are threatened by a flagging economy); and a simultaneous increase in the political influence of the under-educated, as a result of their increasing numbers.

ISSUES IN SCHOOL FINANCE: CHANGING PATTERNS OF INEQUALITY

Big differences in the amounts of money available for the schooling of rural or inner-city youngsters, compared to their more advantaged counterparts, play an important role in maintaining the inequalities of opportunity that persist in America, according to Dr. Stuart Rosenfeld, director of research and programs for the Southern Growth Policies Board. Dr. Rosenfeld traced the evolution of school finance issues. Twenty years ago, he said, parents and activists raised the issue of resource inequalities, using the state courts. They sought judicial relief at first on the grounds that their children's educational needs weren't being met. The state courts' response was: "We can't judge those needs;" and the initial round of suits was lost.

Then the parents and their lawyers "got a little smarter" and changed the basis of their complaints to the issue of resource equity. "We deserve," they argued, "as much as other school districts, even if we can't afford it

ourselves." They then won a series of court victories on that basis. School finance reform quickly became a major issue in efforts to make education more equitable.

Margaret Goertz

"We are in danger of creating two separate and unequal educational systems: one system that must direct all of its limited resources toward the teaching of basic skills and the mastery of state-mandated competencies; and another system that has sufficient resources to provide both a basic educational program and broader educational opportunities."

MARGARET GOERTZ

New Directions for Fewer Dollars

Dr. Margaret Goertz, a senior research scientist at the Educational Testing Service, outlined some disquieting recent developments in school finance in rural and inner-city areas of the South.

In the decade of the 1970s, broadening educational opportunities were available to minorities through school desegregation and to children attending schools in low-wealth communities through state-initiated school finance reform measures. A 28 percent increase in real dollars flowed into education; and most of the benefits were to the property-poor local school districts.

Some of the revenue gains of the 1970s rapidly eroded in the early 1980s, through a combination of recession and inflation. In addition, the attention of educational "reformers" was deflected to issues of so-called "excellence," focusing on how we could use dollars more efficiently and effectively. While many states put additional funds into the new reform efforts, and in some cases increased state taxes to do so, increases in real revenues for education have been modest in the post-reform years, rising on average by only seven percent. Today, in the South, even after many expenditure disparities among districts have narrowed, a considerable mismatch remains between the educational needs of rural and urban communities and the resources necessary to meet those needs.

Creating Separate and Unequal Systems

In addition, Dr. Goertz said, as underfunded districts are pressed to meet standards mandated by the school reform legislation, "we are in danger of creating two separate and unequal educational systems: one system that must direct all of its limited resources toward the teaching of basic skills and the mastery of state-mandated competencies; and another system that has sufficient resources to provide *both* a basic educational program and broader educational opportunities." The states that have mandated the new standards have generally not increased their share of educational funding (between 1983 and 1986 the state share of funding rose only from 52 percent to 53 percent), but they *have* increased the pressure to spend money on the development of basic skills, to the exclusion of other goals.

Simultaneously, urban and rural school districts continue to deal with increasing numbers of "at-risk" students. While the problems created by high levels of poverty in rural areas such as Appalachia and the Deep South have been well documented, the public is less aware of the growing educational problems of students in the central cities of the South.

Historically, cities have been centers of prosperity in the Southern states. Wealth was often concentrated in the cities, while minority groups and other low-income groups were concentrated in areas around the cities. Today, the situation has changed considerably. 1980 census data indicates that the percentage of the population living under conditions of poverty in the central cities is now two to three times that of the surrounding urban areas: 26 percent to nine percent in Atlanta; 26 percent to 10 percent in New

Orleans; 20 percent to seven percent in Richmond. Twenty to 30 percent of central city households in the South are headed by females, in comparison with a 15 percent statewide average.

Furthermore, like many of the poorest rural counties in the South, central city school districts have rapidly become "majority-minority" districts. In 1982, 92.5 percent of the public school students in Atlanta were minority group members, as well as 71 percent in Miami, 89 percent in New Orleans and 63 percent in Norfolk. Although achievement gaps between whites and minority group members have narrowed in the last 15 years, the disparities — and the need for more resources for minority groups — remain great. The 1983-84 National Assessment of Educational Progress showed, for example, that in five Southern states, 19 percent of black eleventh graders had the reading skills required to begin college-level work, compared to 47 percent of the whites tested.

In terms of school finance, these statistics, simply put, mean the school districts with the greatest needs have the fewest resources to meet those needs. There are rapidly growing disparities between the wealth of suburban school districts in the South and their urban and rural counterparts.

Dr. Goertz pointed to four general reasons why these disparities exist, despite the school finance reforms of the 1970s and the "excellence reforms" of the 1980s:

- limitations to the state foundation formulas themselves;
- inadequate funding of programs for disadvantaged populations;
- a general "underfunding of state aid programs," resulting in lower appropriations than "required" by mandated "foundation" formulas;
- and the special problems of cities.

State foundation formulas, with rare exceptions, include no adjustments for the extra costs of educating "at-risk" students. So the critical question, Dr. Goertz says, is *how substantial is the foundation level relative to real spending* in districts across each state? In Texas, for example, the basic foundation allotment in 1985-86 was less than half the average per pupil expenditure; and a similar situation exists in most other states. For the poorest school districts, the foundation allotment often represents about 90 percent of all they have available to spend.

In the past few years, many states have targeted new monies for "at-risk" students, particularly in the form of state compensatory education efforts. But again the question is, how substantial is the state funding vis-a-vis the needs of educationally disadvantaged students? One way of comparing states' efforts is to look at state compensatory education (programs for the educationally disadvantaged) funds as a percentage of available federal compensatory education ("Chapter One") funds. Here the picture is mixed. In South Carolina and Texas, where substantial investments in compensatory education have been made, money for the state compensatory education programs is about 25 percent *higher* than federal funds. In other states, it ranges from only 10 percent of federal funds (North Carolina, Louisiana) to 20-25 percent (Florida, Georgia) of federal funds.

A third problem involves recent state legislative practices freezing state educational appropriations, or allocating less than required by the foundation formulas. Many states that revised their state foundation formulas in the mid-1970s in the interests of equity cut their contributions when recession hit at the end of the decade; and few have gone back to full funding.

Thus financial reforms did not increase significantly the state share in educational expenditures. Between 1973 and 1981, Texas' share went from 52 percent to 53 percent; Florida stayed at 62 percent; Arkansas went from 65 percent to 70 percent; Tennessee went from 52 percent to 55 percent; and Kentucky went *down* from 79 percent to 74 percent.

Added to these state-wide problems are the special problems experienced by the cities. Despite their high levels of educational need, the size of the property tax base in many cities often limits the flow of state aid, because the cities look richer on paper than they really are. State allocation formulas thus often allocate lower funding percentages to big city systems: 60 percent to Miami, where the state average in 1982-83 was 62 percent; 33 percent to Nashville, where it was 52 percent; 41 percent to Dallas, where it was 52 percent.

Implications for the Future

Disparities in educational expenditures have resulted in large disparities in educational programs. High spending districts have smaller classes, more specialized academic programs, more guidance counselors, more computers, and the like. "What worries me," said Dr. Goertz, "is that these programmatic differences will become legitimized by state actions designed to ensure that all students meet minimum state standards in spite of limited resources." As the needs of the educationally disadvantaged are growing, so are gaps between richer and poorer districts. The prospects for urban schools seem particularly dim.

"The urban school districts will have a basic skills curriculum, and that will be it, whereas the districts that have much more money to spend will have the basic skills curriculum, *and* the advanced placement curriculum, *and* the other kinds of opportunities necessary to get students into good jobs and into good post-secondary institutions," Dr. Goertz said.

The Bottom Line in a "Megatrend State"

In response to Dr. Goertz's remarks, Ms. Dorothy Routh, who served until recently as a special assistant in the Office of the President Pro Tempore of the Florida State Senate, recounted some recent steps taken by the Florida legislature to respond to the needs of the educationally disadvantaged.

Florida, Ms. Routh explained, is a "megatrend state" with a "tremendous amount of growth to manage." Its schools have to absorb some 50,000 new students every year. Florida now also has the highest high school graduation standards in the country, thus making extra assistance for the educationally disadvantaged imperative. "If we're going to be demanding high standards, the disadvantaged students have got to be given some additional help," Ms. Routh said. "That's the bottom line."

She outlined a number of new programs, many aimed at disadvantaged students. A major Dropout Prevention Act was created after a re-examination of Florida's alternative education program, for which $90 million has been allocated. The idea was to take that rather vague and broad-based program, and to target the money to reduce Florida's serious dropout problems. (Of 120,000 students who entered the ninth grade in Florida's class of 1985, only 80,000 graduated.)

The legislature did not mandate dropout prevention programs in every district. Rather, they required that every school district that wanted a piece of the $90 million available come up with a comprehensive dropout preven-

Dorothy Routh

"If we're going to be demanding high standards, the disadvantaged students have got to be given some additional help. That's just the bottom line."

DOROTHY ROUTH

tion program. The legislators also did not tell the districts how they should do it, but instead identified different program areas such as substance abuse, teen parents, and court-adjudicated youngsters and certain program approaches (e.g. parental involvement, drop out retrieval strategies, inter-agency coordination, business involvement) that must be addressed in each proposal. In addition, the legislature allocated $1 million for dropout programs operated by community-based non-profit groups, rather than the schools.

In addition, Ms. Routh outlined new categorical initiatives in the following areas:

- day care programs for the children of teen mothers ($800,000 in matching funds);
- a pre-school program for three and four-year-olds ($750,000);
- a small "latch-key" program for children of working parents who need after-school attention and care;
- a "Safe Schools" program that allocated $11 million into urban school districts for such services as school resource officers;
- a primary school improvement program that allocates $90 million to supplement the weighted formula allocation to the primary schools;
- a $15 million "sparcity adjustment" that deals with the inadequacies of rural school resources.

Ms. Routh emphasized some of the advantages of such categorical programs. While several were sparsely funded initially, "at least you have your foot in the door. You can start small, but keep expanding." In addition, legislators tend to like categorical programs, because they represent something they can understand and identify with. In contrast, when you get into the "very complex issues" of school finance, many legislators don't really understand the complex formulas involved, she said.

Following the remarks from Dr. Goertz and Ms. Routh, questions from the audience raised several additional points. The idea of using money from state lotteries for special educational needs was proposed; and the point was made that such monies need to be earmarked very carefully for educational purposes, and preferably kept in a separate trust fund, to make certain that such monies don't supplant educational expenditures.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

To help identify some of the keys to effective leadership in urban and rural schools, Professor Peter Edelman of Georgetown University Law School introduced three prominent educational leaders: Dr. Willie W. Herenton, superintendent of schools in Memphis, the twelfth largest school system in the nation; Dr. Lois Harrison-Jones, school superintendent in Richmond, Virginia; and Dr. Barbara Hatton, dean of the School of Education at Tuskegee University.

Can All Children Really Learn?

"A key ingredient to effective educational leadership," Dr. Herenton said, "is to motivate teachers and administrators to have the firm belief that all children can learn." Citing the Effective Schools research of the late Ron Edmonds,

which has become the basis for a burgeoning effective schools movement nationally, he listed five factors which distinguish effective from ineffective schools:

- strong administrative leadership in *both* instruction and management;
- greater emphasis on basic reading and math objectives;
- a safe and orderly school environment which allows teachers and pupils to focus their energies on achievement;
- the expectation that, under the proper conditions, all children can learn;
- the utilization of adequate assessment devices to provide continuous feedback on the effects of instruction.

The ability of the principal to establish and maintain these characteristics will go a long way in determining his or her effectiveness as a leader. In the effective school movement, the "most difficult notion to get teachers and other professionals to buy into" is the notion that virtually all children can learn if they are expected to learn, and provided with effective instruction by teachers who hold high expectations for them.

Why is this notion so difficult to get across? By way of explanation, Dr. Herenton cited another statement by Ron Edmonds: "Repudiation of the social science notion that family background is the principal cause of pupil acquisition of basic school skills is probably prerequisite to successful reform of public schools for the children of the poor." Herenton deplored the situation where "race and family environment seem to preoccupy so many of our professionals." He pointed to the need for a "different kind of leadership" for the late 1980s, to "defy the odds that an urban school system cannot be productive."

New leaders must take clear positions, Dr. Herenton asserted, and demonstrate that they will not "play politics" with the educational futures of the children for whom they are responsible. They must not only be competent, but be able to demonstrate stamina and dedication. Most of all, they must themselves be committed to the notion that all children can learn.

Dr. Herenton also identified a number of "myths" about leadership, which included that leadership is a "rare skill;" that leaders are born, not made; that "leaders are all charismatic;" and that leadership exists only at the top of an organization. "There are many leadership roles within a school organization," he insisted, "and good leaders are needed at every level of a successful school system. They must be able to empower others. They must be good at communicating goals. They must be effective 'self-managers;' must be able to stay organized; and must establish high expectations."

Willie W. Herenton

"A key ingredient is to motivate teachers and administrators to have the firm belief that all children can learn."
WILLIE HERENTON

Leadership Beyond the Individual School

Dr. Lois Harrison-Jones reflected on her experiences as superintendent of Richmond schools. She made a careful distinction between the responsibilities of leaders of individual schools.

Most districts, she observed, have schools within them that constitute islands or "oases" of excellence, but their very existence can sometimes place a stigma on being in one of the other, "regular" schools. Thus these "oases of excellence" can be overshadowed by the poor images of the other schools; or the district can be shaken by overmigration to the oases. "Effective district leadership must set goals beyond the creation of islands of excellence," she said.

Effective leaders must also establish links and elicit participation from "all sectors:" business, government, "even our foes." One important role is to convince those who oppose expenditures for educational quality that this is an investment, not a cost — an investment in potential employees, in local economic development, in community development. The effective district leaders must be able to clarify issues and "extract from the community a consensus about what the primary functions of that school division must be," tenaciously guarding the instructional objectives of the schools from community pressures for schools to serve all kinds of other purposes.

Barbara Hatton

"Some of the students we have in my program have never seen a whole group of black youngsters really perform up to grade level. Until they see it, they are unlikely to try to re-create it themselves."

BARBARA HATTON

Who Will Lead Us?

Dr. Barbara Hatton raised some questions about the views we hold of our educational leaders. Do we frequently view them with disdain and question their basic competence, or conversely, expect miracles of them? Do we put them under the gun in terms of "delivering the goods;" and then fail to provide them with appropriate support?

She also expressed some uneasiness about "calls for dedication and commitment" from educational leaders. "Yes, we want them to be dedicated," she said, "but let's make sure we also provide the financial security to which they are entitled."

Dr. Hatton addressed three basic issues:

- Who are these people we call educational leaders?
- How will we get them?
- What will we want them to do?

Who they are, she pointed out, are usually white men: "As we go up the ranks in the public school system, the leaders are increasingly white and male." How we get them, she suggested, is changing. There is less emphasis on credits from institutions of higher education as the admissions ticket for educational leadership positions, and more emphasis on practical on-site training, often jointly sponsored by schools and higher education institutions.

Dr. Hatton expressed concern that the new site-based access routes could very easily produce even less access to leadership roles for women and minority group members. "The question of access is simply something we're going to have to worry about and hold these new processes accountable for," she said.

Dr. Hatton endorsed the notion of focusing on the organizational task. Too often, she agreed, the focus of educational leaders is on keeping constituent groups happy, or on the limitations on learning presumed to derive from family background or race.

Follow-Up Issues

Conference participants raised a number of questions about educational leadership. Should we go outside the education profession to bring in new leadership from the business world? How can we measure or evaluate the commitment of teachers to the proposition that all children can learn?

The panel was unanimously opposed to bringing in non-educators to play educational leadership roles in the schools. Leadership in schools is broader than management, Dr. Hatton insisted, requiring its own knowledge base. "Administrators need to have had front-line experience as teachers," Dr. Herenton observed.

On the issue of assessing teacher commitment to the idea all children can learn, Dr. Herenton was pessimistic. "I don't know of any staff development program," he lamented, "that can change some of the basic beliefs that teachers have about students based on race." Dr. Harrison-Jones and Dr. Hatton recognized the difficulty of this problem, but were somewhat more hopeful. Dr. Harrison-Jones maintained that it was possible to weed out prospective teachers who "demonstrate unchangeable attitudes" during preservice training, and stressed the importance of counseling such people out of the profession early on. Dr. Hatton stressed the need to demonstrate the capacity of disadvantaged and minority students as a key to promoting attitude change.

"Some of the students we have in my (teacher training) program have never seen a whole group of black youngsters really perform up to grade level. They come from situations where there were just a few doing all right; and they have experienced that kind of failure syndrome all of their educational careers, so they are not familiar with a single demonstration of success. Until they see it," Dr. Hatton said, "they are unlikely to try to recreate it themselves."

Augustus F. Hawkins

WORKABLE FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Citing Ron Edmond's contention that "whether or not we educate particular groups of children depends on how important they are to us," California Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins, chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor and dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, stressed the importance of the effective schools movement to the future education of the children of the poor.

As a nation, Congressman Hawkins pointed out, we are making a political choice when we fail to provide the resources to offer real educational opportunity to these children. Not only do we create the need for more costly programs down the road, he said, but we give up the potential contributions of a vast untapped source of talent. "Who knows how many scientists, how many engineers, how many businesspersons, how many outstanding people are in that group that we have decided as a nation not to educate?"

Congressman Hawkins insisted that we have already learned enough to prevent the imminent elimination of a whole generation of children from participation in society. We know, for example, that the effective schools principles work, that they have been replicated successfully in many places. How may times do we really have to prove that poor children can learn? "We don't know everything," Hawkins acknowledged, "but we know a lot more than we are implementing."

In some important ways, he suggested, we are moving rapidly backwards. Between 1960 and 1973, under the Great Society and War on Poverty programs, the United States decreased the number of people in poverty by some 18 million. Since 1973, that number has *increased* by 35 million. In one decade, the number of children in poverty has almost doubled. And we have yet to really question, as a nation, Hawkins said, how these "shameful trends" developed.

There are partisan disputes over many of these numbers, he admitted, but it is important to insist on more accurate figures than we get from the administration, for several reasons. The smaller numbers lull those who represent non-minority constituencies to inaction in the belief that only minority groups are represented in the figures. Artificially low estimates desensitize people to the problems. What is really happening is that "those that do not count are not counted," he said.

Hawkins quoted former Secretary of Education Terrell Bell on the consequences of illiteracy: "A disproportionate percentage of functional illiterates are on public welfare, and a prime common denominator is the level of schooling attained. The proportion of these with fewer than six grades of school is more than double that of those with nine to eleven years of school." The illiteracy problem is becoming more severe, not less, he said, due to dropouts, immigration, and other factors.

There is need for strong federal leadership, he insisted, to deal with these problems. Referring to a recent governors' conference report to the effect that the governors are "willing to go it alone," Congressman Hawkins stated that "the governors can't go it alone, whether they want to or not." There is no realistic danger of any federal takeover of education, but the federal government has an important role to play as a "junior partner" in education.

Some of the major recent efforts by Congressman Hawkins' committee likely to be revived in the 100th Congress (1987-88) include the Drop-Out Prevention and Re-Entry Act, the Technology Education Act, the Effective Schools and Even-Start Act, the Youth Suicide Prevention Act, and the School Lunch and Child Nutrition Act.

Congressman Hawkins urged conference participants to continue to fight to maintain the gains made in the past two decades, despite current administration efforts to cut proven programs back.

THE IMPACT OF CHANGING STANDARDS

Richard Boyd, state superintendent of schools in Mississippi, led off the second day of the Conference with an analysis of the impact of rapidly changing educational standards in the South.

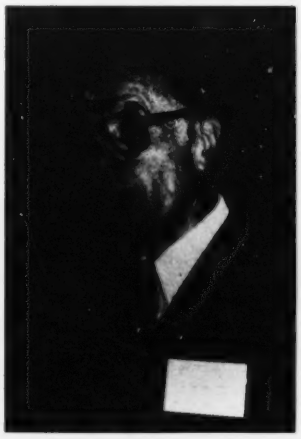
Dr. Boyd described a kind of "morning-after" effect on governors and state legislators. For many, there is the delayed realization of the real costs of meeting the new standards that have been mandated. The testing required, for example, turns out to be expensive, but far more expensive are the implications of low scores on the tests: what will be the cost of remedial steps to bring the scores up to the new standard? Similarly, there is the concern that perhaps they have over-regulated the education enterprise in some unhealthy ways. There is concern about obstacles to implementing the new standards and new ideas, such as merit pay.

For local boards and superintendents, the new standards contribute to the creation of a "different mind set," Dr. Boyd said. He used the example of changes that result from stricter attendance requirements. Where before the school baseball game took precedence over class time, the new attendance standards have given local school authorities a legitimate reason to resist local pressures to give up school time for other activities.

Because of the new standards, the principals have an increased sense of their own importance, yet at the same time, are more aware of their lack of certain crucial skills. The growing emphasis on the principal's role as the school's instructional leader and as the creator of an environment that facilitates learning helps persuade the principals to develop their instructional skills, through such means as state-sponsored principal retraining institutes.

Some teachers feel that the brunt of the impact of reform has fallen on them, although they did not have much of a voice in the framing of the reform. In some states, like Texas and Arkansas, recertification competency tests for practicing teachers impose new and often unwelcome standards. For some, the new standards seem to require even more paperwork. And, for most, new curriculum standards mean a restricted flexibility in their choice of subject matter.

Tougher standards of entrance into both schools of education and into the teaching profession itself have been imposed in most states, despite misgivings about the ability of available tests to measure skills relevant to teaching performance. A concern about the negative effect of the new standards on the rapidly dwindling numbers of black teachers is growing in many states, despite an understanding that other factors are also contributing to reductions in the number of minority teachers.



Richard A. Boyd

"The public still wants those standards and higher levels of performance, and we are simply not going to get the resources we need for continued improvement unless we can show that we have high standards and that we are improving."
RICHARD A. BOYD

Higher Expectations of Students

For the students, the reforms have meant being held to higher standards, and "that's good," said Dr. Boyd, pointing out that high expectations have been recognized as a major correlate of effective schools for educationally disadvantaged youngsters. Time devoted to school has increased, and the number and difficulty of tests for both promotion and graduation have risen significantly. With respect to the controversial "no-pass/no-play" rules affecting student-athletes, Dr. Boyd suggested that the jury was "still out," but he cited evidence that far fewer students were being declared ineligible during the second year of the program.

"The public," Dr. Boyd warned, "still wants those standards and higher levels of performance, and we are simply not going to get the resources we need for continued improvement unless we can show that we have high standards and that we are improving."

Educators are stuck, then, with the task of mediating between the public's general desire for higher standards, and the necessity for providing assistance to individual students so that their talents are not lost to society. "I think that we can do that," Dr. Boyd said.

He based his optimism on several developments. First, there are signs the general public is coming to understand the importance of not wasting our human resources. Second, the next stage of reform is focusing on "at-risk" youth as its highest priority. The National Association of Chief State School Officers, for example, has recently decided to give the problem of "at-risk" youth "virtually all our attention" over the next year. Finally, and most encouragingly, the effective schools research is beginning to "permeate" our school systems. The School Executive Management Institute in Mississippi (and Principals' Institutes in several other states) have focused heavily on the effective school correlates. Finally, and most heartening, according to Dr. Boyd, "as I travel around Mississippi and visit schools and classrooms all over the state, I see everywhere signs that declare 'All Children Can Learn.' "

How Should New Standards Be Applied?

Dr. Terry Peterson, executive assistant for education to the Governor of South Carolina, commented on some of the lessons learned as a result of sweeping educational changes in South Carolina. While agreeing that "real reform" has to take place at the local level, he observed that it also "sometimes takes a kick in the pants to generate local interest to make things happen. Well-thought-out state reforms focused on outcomes can provide the kick in the pants that might be needed." The "trick," he observed, is to pair the kick in the pants with a grass roots approach from local people who support change and can take advantage of new standards to promote improvements from within.

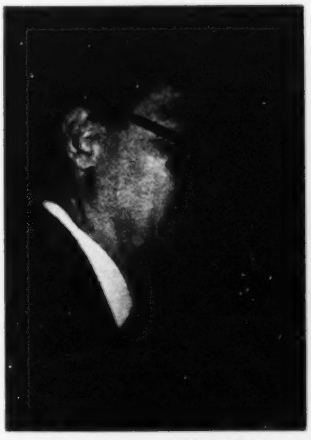
Dr. Peterson emphasized that, in raising student standards, *how* you go about the process is all-important. Success, he suggested, depends on five factors:

- that there is a general consensus built up before standards are raised;
- that over a period of time you *realistically* set the level of the hurdle;
- that the new standards are "phased in" over time, so that school systems and students and parents can adjust to meeting them;
- that every measure is used to make the public aware and to get people ready for the new standards;
- that you do everything in your power to help the students most challenged by the new standards.

Another key, Dr. Peterson maintained, is involving teachers from the very beginning. States that run into the greatest difficulty with their reform packages have not motivated the teachers before, during or after the reforms passed, and "then what you get is massive resistance from the only people who are teaching the students."

Dr. Peterson bemoaned the tendency to deny state departments of education extra funding to implement the new standards and new incentives. "If no extra money is available, instead of being able to bring in new blood to help implement the new ideas, state departments assign extra responsibilities to bureaucrats who don't really understand the purpose of the reforms, or who are already overwhelmed by their current responsibilities."

Dr. Peterson closed with some encouraging news about South Carolina's efforts to make sure at-risk students do not "fall through the cracks" as higher standards are imposed. He pointed especially to encouraging results from new early childhood programs for at-risk four-year-olds, from mandatory attendance in kindergarten for five-year-olds, and from "extra help in reading, math and writing" through a state-funded remedial and compensatory program for students scoring below standards. Since the reforms have begun, for example, the number of black fourth graders scoring in the bottom quartile has been cut almost in half, and the student dropout rate in high school is the lowest in seven years.



Terry Peterson

"To get public support for more money, we have to communicate that the reforms will demand more from everybody."
TERRY PETERSON

The Dangers of New Standards

University of Chicago Professor Gary Orfield offered some comments on the impact of new standards, primarily in states without the resources or sophistication provided by education leaders in Mississippi and South Carolina.

One effect of changing standards in such areas seem to be an exacerbation of curriculum differences between urban black and suburban white

schools. Pre-collegiate curriculum requirements are being imposed on large, heavily minority school districts without any feasibility studies, and without any resources to staff the new courses. The urban districts are not able to keep up; and "tremendous differences" between urban and suburban curriculums result. High school completion and college admissions of low-income and minority youngsters are falling significantly in states where little or no help is available to get such students over the new hurdles.

Questions and comments from conference participants focused primarily on the ways in which some of the standards are being imposed. Are we making appropriate distinctions between standards and standardization? Can we find better standards than the ones now available, for example, for evaluating teachers? What are some of the more questionable practices in the early implementation of new standards by the states?

The panelists responded to these questions in different ways. Dr. Boyd observed that a tendency to standardize is "one of the biggest problems we have right now." Dr. Peterson, however, felt that the idea of standards could be transformed into the idea of "reasonable outcomes." He lamented, however, that educational researchers have done a "miserable job" in providing more flexible measuring tools to policymakers.

All the panelists acknowledged the need for better and more meaningful standards for measuring teacher performance. Dr. Boyd said Mississippi would soon supplement NTE scores with a provisional year for first-year teachers, during which time local colleges and the local school district could evaluate the teachers' practical performance prior to full certification.

In looking at some of the questionable implementation areas, the panelists cited a number of unwieldy reforms. The re-testing of already certified teachers in Arkansas and Texas, for example, probably created more divisiveness and trouble than it was worth, some said. The ability of the state to declare local school districts "educationally bankrupt" and to take over educational responsibilities from the local board seems to have shown some early signs of results in South Carolina, according to Dr. Peterson, but Dr. Boyd questioned whether the disruptiveness of this procedure would be ultimately worthwhile, in light of evidence that such districts soon revert to their old form when power is returned. The rigid imposition of new college entry requirements was viewed as a particular threat to minority enrollment, especially in states where effective high-school and pre-college preparation programs are not yet in place. Finally, Dr. Peterson suggested that too many states may have been "over-prescriptive" in setting curriculum standards, and wished that South Carolina had remembered to include, when money was more available, a program to help middle-school students who are potential dropouts meet the new achievement standards.

David Bergholz

"When people are called upon to stand up and be counted on the question of paying for school improvements, there's nobody there."
DAVID BERGHOLZ

BUILDING CONSTITUENCIES TO SUPPORT PUBLIC EDUCATION

David Bergholz, president of the Pittsburgh-based Public Education Fund, described the development and expansion of a strategy to mobilize communities to support local education.

The Public Education Fund was formed in Pittsburgh by the Allegheny

Conference on Community Development, an "economic development and downtown improvement" organization operated by local corporate leaders. The Conference came to the school issue as a by-product of the concern of corporate leadership for economic development, skilled employees, the turmoil which the school system was undergoing over issues of school finance and desegregation, and shrinking school populations.

The Allegheny Conference consciously avoided pretending that corporate leadership had anything profound to say about the management of the public schools. Instead they started by assisting schools with public information, offering help in the preparation of a professionally designed annual report, which was distributed very widely within the community.

They then launched a series of other initiatives, including:

- an "Adopt-A-School" program;
- an effort to "raise the level of public debate" about school issues, by bringing in a series of nationally recognized educational leaders to speak to local corporate and foundation leaders;
- a series of small grants awarded directly to teachers;
- small grant programs directed to principals, and, later, specifically for innovative ideas for parental involvement;
- a small discretionary fund for the superintendent;
- assistance to the school system in explaining itself to "the outside world" (e.g. a small grant to launch a series of meetings aimed at real estate agents, who are frequently the first interpreters of the local public school system to newcomers to the community).

The teacher grants were administered directly to individuals submitting the best ideas, circumventing internal administrative barriers that might otherwise have hampered the program. The impact on teacher morale was substantial; and the activities of the individual teachers provided excellent public relations for the schools. Also, Bergholz said, they helped to change "the public perspective of teachers as dolts."

The Allegheny Conference also got involved in some "major school improvement" efforts, and having learned how small things can lead to big things through efforts to enhance public confidence in the schools, the

Mini-grants from the Public Education Fund have enabled teachers to expand classroom activities. Here, an elementary school mural-painting project.

Conference in 1983, with help from the Ford Foundation, launched the Public Education Fund. PEF is a national effort to spread the notion of building intermediary organizations within school districts, and to put such brokers in place around the country. Bergholz emphasized the importance of the establishment of a local "non-profit entrepreneur" seeking to improve the local climate for support of the public schools as a precondition for other improvements.

"When people are called upon to stand up and be counted on the question of paying for school improvements, *there's nobody there.* And so I keep going back to minus square one, and saying, 'How do we get people into the trenches with us?' " To build such constituencies, he argued, you have to establish "some relatively neutral place" in which the various constituent groups can come together and begin to address the issues.

In becoming a grant-maker and attempting to spread a public constituency-building technology around the country, Bergholz learned how difficult good grant-making can be. He urged the foundation representatives at the Continuing Conference to think about new strategies. "Trust some people out there," he urged, "and make some money available for the opportunistic side of school improvement, especially in areas (like teacher mini-grants) where you don't have that much to lose."

Willis McLeod

"Success in building constituent groups for schools is directly related to the perceived honesty, candor, and integrity of school personnel."
WILLIS McLEOD

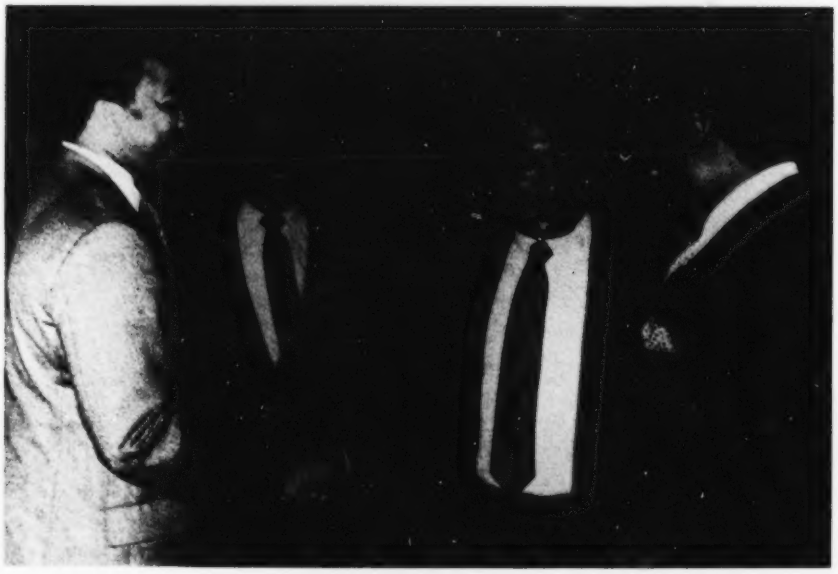
Implementation in the South

The Southern Education Foundation is working with PEF to create local education funds in the rural South through a joint venture, the Fund for Rural Education Enhancement (FREE).

To illustrate the way in which the idea has been implemented, Robert Kronley called upon Dr. Willis McLeod, superintendent of schools in Northampton County, a peanut-raising community in northeastern North Carolina that is heavily dependent on agriculture. Dr. McLeod discussed the local strategies required in such an area.

Building constituent groups in public education, he said, requires a tremendous investment of time and patience; effective communications; a sensitivity to others' perceptions; and a well thought-out marketing plan. "Most of the people we recruit will usually be very busy. Therefore, it is unlikely that they will have much patience for agendas that they do not understand and cannot identify with. Even then, they must be allowed sufficient time for dialogue, to question, to share their opinions, and to express their related experiences and concerns." Such time is crucial because the ultimate goal is to develop a constituency which feels "just as much ownership as we do about our mission in education." Potential constituents must be given time to vent their egos, and to find places on the agenda appropriate to their own expertise. However, a majority of these persons will commit their time and resources, once they are convinced that the ideas, programs, and projects will have positive impact on improving the quality of life for people, especially children.

Where can such persons be found? Dr. McLeod believes that in many communities there are two key groups of individuals whose resources are not tapped sufficiently and effectively. "These are ministers, senior citizens, and our retired persons' organizations, such as the retired teachers association," McLeod said. "Oftentimes we forget them," he said, "because they are perceived to be unable physically, or not interested. Yet senior citizens



represent a very significant percentage of our population and are, in many instances, the most affluent people in the community. They, collectively, may pay a significant portion of our real estate and personal property taxes. They may also have sufficient voting strength to pass or defeat millages and bond referendums. Educators will probably be very surprised as to how willing many of them are to give their knowledge and experience to our children and educational programs."

Ministers in many communities serve on school boards, and many are strong advocates for quality education. When we stop to consider the large number of people they lead and minister to, however, it becomes apparent that they could be even more help if mobilized as an organization. Three years ago, McLeod organized a ministers' coalition in his community to deal with teen pregnancy, school dropouts, and a myriad of other such problems. "Since that time they have been very instrumental in helping us receive over $10,000 from various sources to assist with our school dropout, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol problems. Many of them have organized homework and counseling programs in their churches and communities. Our current major project is to provide expanded educational opportunities for pre-school children through the churches."

Dr. McLeod also stressed the need for school systems to adapt to the changing nature and needs of the growing constituency of single parents: "Divorce touches nearly half of all American households. Yet results of a nationwide poll by The National Committee for Citizens in Education showed that the majority of single parents feel schools are unresponsive to their needs."

Dr. McLeod suggested a number of ways of building constituency support in a small community:

- provide operators of businesses where "a good deal of conversation takes place about almost everything" (barber shops, beauty shops, real estate offices, grocery stores) with newsletters and other publications about the schools;

- encourage staff members to participate in community activities; and
- conduct public opinion polls on school issues at least every three years, utilizing system-wide organizations of parents or citizens to help conduct the poll.

He also expressed the strong belief that the press can be helpful in building community support, provided that educators are willing to take the necessary steps to overcome mutual suspicions.

Dr. McLeod closed by suggesting that, when all is said and done, success in building constituent groups for schools is directly related to the perceived honesty, candor, and integrity of school personnel. "If your constituents do not trust and have faith in you," he warned, "it will make little difference what steps you take."

Building on Small Victories

Xavier University President Norman Francis, who also serves as chairman of the board of the Southern Education Foundation, described one of PEF's urban-based efforts in New Orleans. Dr. Francis addressed his initial remarks to the "people who give out money," saying that one of the things he had learned from his work with the fund was what you can do with a little money. What is significant about a local education fund is that it "does what common sense tells you to do. It takes things that are simple, that people can get a hold of and build on," he said.

The first constituency, he observed, is the school board, and the first task is to overcome their natural suspiciousness of outside groups. The need is to communicate that "all we want to do is to help create a climate where change can take place," and that "we want to do it outside the system," while maintaining an independent status.

Groups then need to start with quantifiable goals and seek "small victories" on which they can later build. To pursue a series of doable goals, the New Orleans group first promoted a series of business partnerships, which grew rapidly from 50 to 150. Partnerships, he suggested, are a more felicitious approach than adopt-a-school programs, which suggest a kind of big brother/little brother relationship "which is not healthy." They also adopted a teacher mini-grant program, which attracted some 380 applications in its first round.

Dr. Francis closed with the advice to "get involved with simple, supportive things" that can help build public support for education and, at the same time, lay the groundwork for larger, future victories.

Supporting the Superintendent

Questions from Conference participants elicited additional strategic advice. If it's smart, David Bergholz suggested, the local education fund will link up with and provide support for the superintendent who, as the chief executive officer, has the main responsibility for involving the school board. "Don't wait for perfection in school boards," he urged. "It is not a wait worth waiting for." Superintendent McLeod reinforced Bergholz's advice, suggesting that a good way to "involve" school boards is to "work them to death." Find out what the school board wants to see happening in their area, he said, and weave what they want into the district's agenda.

EDUCATIONAL IMPERATIVES IN THE NEW SOUTH

Norman Francis introduced Mary Hatwood Futrell, president of the National Education Association, to deliver a "teacher's perspective" on education and employment. A former classroom teacher in Alexandria, Virginia, Ms. Futrell in 1985 launched a national NEA campaign to combat illiteracy and the school dropout problem.

Ms. Futrell began by commenting on how misunderstood the South really is: "I am a Southerner," she said. "My travels throughout the South bring home every day the realization that too many Americans do not understand the South. They don't understand our unique problems and they don't understand our unique potential."

"The misconceptions of outsiders," she maintained, "are not unique. Many of our fellow Southerners suffer from equally biased misconceptions about themselves and the South. Correcting those misconceptions, reconciling misunderstandings of the South of the past and the South of today and tomorrow is a major educational task for everyone who lives in and loves this region."

"Many people think of the South as a sleepy, rural place full of farmers and little country towns. That's simply not the case," she insisted. "In every Southern state except two, more people live in urban areas. I travel throughout the country and people say, 'That's the South, so don't expect too much.' Are we going to let those expectations be the realities, or are we going to say that we are going to shape our region to be the best in the nation? I submit to you today that the true measure of that question lies in what we are willing to do for our children, their educational opportunities, and for their and our future. Education is the building block that the South needs in order to reach its true potential."

Three years ago, she observed, education reform became a national movement. Nowhere has that movement been more closely watched or more politically heeded than in the South. But for all the political rhetoric, she asked, what has been produced to help the children of this region, and what has education reform meant for their future? Perhaps the best way to begin answering, she said, is to look at the status of children in the South.

There are 63 million people living in the eleven Southern states of the Old Confederacy. Of that 63 million, almost 13 million — 20 percent — are between the ages of five and 17. Of those 13 million children, almost two million receive Aid For Dependent Children. "For all the talk of a revitalized South, it is clear that economic prosperity is not reaching the children of this region, and, from all the studies which are beginning to emerge, not reaching the children of America, *period.*"

In the South today, she reported, we have more children and more poor children. In Mississippi, 25 perent of all the children in the state require federal assistance. Other numbers tell an even more distressing story. Florida has the oldest population in the South, and percentage-wise it has fewer children than any of the other Southern states. It ranks 20th in the nation in per capita income, and yet Florida, with its personal wealth and its smaller percentage of children, has seen a 22.7 percent increase in children receiving AFDC support in the past decade. Virginia, which has the second oldest

Mary Futrell

"For all the talk of a revitalized South, it is clear that economic prosperity is not reaching the children of this region, and, from all the studies which are beginning to emerge, not reaching the children of America, period."

MARY H. FUTRELL

population in the South, is 13th nationally in per capita income, yet Virginia had a 36 percent increase in the number of children who require federal subsistence support over the past decade.

Ms. Futrell reminded participants of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who "captured the imagination of America" when he said, "You can't expect a people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps when they don't have boots." She suggested that "the very best and brightest teacher in America will find it extremely difficult to instill the hunger for knowledge in a child overwhelmed by a hunger for meat and potatoes, or a child who has not received proper medical care, or a child who will go home and know that it will be much colder at home than it will ever be in school. We have nine million Southerners, 15 percent of all the people living in this region, living below the poverty level. There's been a lot of talk lately about the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots, and nowhere is that more true than in the South."

The Need for an Educated Workforce

Jobs, she urged, are the backbone of prosperity, and prosperity is what the dream of the New South is all about. "Education creates jobs, jobs that build a tax base that allows state and local governments to provide the services that take children off the welfare roles, that provide hope for employment and that allow them to participate in the American dream. Education is the key to creating those jobs," she said.

"Big business today can move anywhere in the country it wants to be. Natural resources are only a secondary factor as to where they will locate. Today the number one factor will be human resources, whether they will be able to find workers who have a decent education, who are trainable, so that the factories or the businesses will not have to reinvest in educating those young people."

That kind of workforce, she said, is found in those states and those communities with a good educational system. Those education systems help to attract jobs not only domestically but internationally. Without that educational base, new jobs are going to get harder and harder to attract. The semi-illiterate or illiterate individuals who ten or 15 years ago could rely on

certain jobs will find — as we move into the 21st century — that job opportunities will be slimmer than ever before. So we are now, she warned, "at the point in our history where we have to educate all of America's children well, because we will need all of America's young people to help support the prosperity of the country.

"We have yet to appreciate fully the interconnection between education and economics, between investment and return," Ms. Futrell said. A study conducted for Congress revealed that for every dollar spent on education, the overall economy receives a return on that investment of $6, a 600 percent return. "For too long and to our own detriment we have been penny-wise and pound-foolish," she said. "Not a single Southern state even comes close to the national average in per capita public service expenditures; and five Southern states rank 45th or lower. Not a single Southern states pays its teachers at or above the national average, and the national average is only $17,000 a year. Seven of the Southern states rank 30th or lower. Tennessee has the fourth largest class size in the country. Alabama has the fifth, North Carolina has the eighth."

Ms. Futrell offered additional statistics. Of the 16 states with the highest dropout rate in the country, 14 of the 16 are in the South. We lose 30 percent or more of our students each year. They end up, oftentimes, on welfare. Sixty percent of all the people in the country who are in prison are high school dropouts. The figures raise important questions: Can we afford to lose a million children a year? Can we afford to lose 30 percent a year? Can America continue to be number one if we lose a million children a year?

Ms. Futrell spoke of the need for financial support from all sources, including her own organization. Two years ago, she was able to persuade the NEA delegates to set aside $1 of each person's dues to create a program called "Operation Rescue," because she believed that they should invest their own money in helping the children. "We're using the money to try to provide grants to local school districts to decrease the dropout problem. So far, we've given out about ten of those awards and four are in the South. We will continue to do all that we can to help decrease the dropout rate." But, she said, we must also raise our expectations not only of local and state governments, but also of federal government. Southern people must prod Congress to be responsive.

"The Southern states receive a disproportionately high percentage of federal support for education. Ten percent of the money Arkansas spends on education comes from the federal government, nine percent in South Carolina and Tennessee, ten percent in Louisiana, sixteen percent in Mississippi. Yet the Southern lawmakers we send to Washington, D.C. have often led the battle to *cut* federal aid to education. When the Graham-Rudman-Hollings bill was passed, it didn't take a crystal ball to realize that the passage of that bill would slash federal aid to education. We said that to each member of Congress.

"Despite this danger, only 28 of the 116 Southern members of Congress voted against the Graham-Rudman-Hollings bill. Eighty-eight members of Congress from 11 Southern states voted for this bill knowing full well that it would cut federal funds for education in their state. Each and every state lost money. And some people wonder why school employees feel the need to get involved in politics. We get involved trying to avoid situations just like the one I've described."

Solving the Problem

Ms. Futrell acknowledged that solving these problems will mean creating new partnerships with business and industry and forging a collaborative effort between government and schools.

"We've seen what partnerships can do. We've seen real leaders like Governor Riley in South Carolina forge partnerships that truly hold forth the hope for education reform. He called for raising the standards for all students, but he also said that if we raise the standards, there are some children who will fall through the cracks unless we provide support programs, personnel and services to help them. He said, 'I am willing to go with the teachers and with the community to the mat to get the resources to do that.' That is what I call a genuine effort. He didn't do it by mandating ideas from on high; he did it by working with teachers, administrators, community leaders, parents and everyone concerned about the education of the people in that state. And he did it to build a comprehensive reform package aimed at making things better for children, not just to get headlines in the local papers."

False Solutions

Ms. Futrell painted a picture of "false reform" in a number of other states: "Problem solving is what education reform is all about. Some Southern states, unfortunately, have not received this message. Some Southern states have chosen to reform education by administering so-called competency tests to veteran teachers and saying, 'Let's pay five or 10 percent of the teachers more than we pay the rest of the teachers.' You can administer all the competency tests to teachers you want, but you'll never have the teachers you need, you deserve, until we improve the conditions in the schools, until we make sure that teachers have a say in the day-to-day decisions which take place in the schools. We have to understand that if we want teachers to come in and to stay in, and if we're going to demand higher and higher requirements, we're going to have to have salaries to match those requirements.

"Some Southern states have toyed with new laws that encourage schools to hire men and women who have never been fully trained to teach. Just bring in a warm body. Place it in front of the students. Most of those emergency certified individuals are being placed in the disadvantaged areas and in areas where we have high concentrations of minority students. We ought to be up in arms about that, but I don't hear a lot of us saying anything.

"We must work closely with our teacher education programs, our teacher education faculty, to make sure that the programs provide quality training. We will not get quality individuals until we hold the colleges and universities more accountable for the quality of the programs that they produce. The students will go to the colleges and universities which give them the quality of education that they need in order to pass the requirements to get into the profession."

Ms. Futrell concluded her remarks with a sobering message drawn from a source oft-quoted during the 1986 Continuing Conference: "According to the report entitled 'Halfway Home and Long Way To Go,' the sunshine of the Sun Belt has proven to be a narrow beam of light, brightening futures along the Atlantic seaboard and in large cities, but skipping over many

small towns and rural areas. The report says it very simply: 'Prosperity has failed to reach many people in the rural region because the South, despite recent improvements, still spends below the national average per pupil, has higher rates of adult illiteracy, reports lower scores on college entrance exams, graduates fewer high school students and sends fewer of them to college and has a population of which one-fourth of white adults and 37 percent of black adults drop out of school by grade eight!' "

We must, she stressed, do better.

Robert Albright

"It becomes clear to us that one has to attack social problems in order to attack educational problems."

ROBERT ALBRIGHT

SOCIAL ISSUES AND THE SCHOOLS

The final panel of the 1986 Continuing Conference addressed social issues and problems that can have a strong impact on educational progress. Dr. Robert Albright, president of Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, presented a summary of some of the observations and recommendations of the recently completed report of the Commission on the Future of the South ("Halfway Home and a Long Way To Go"), a study of conditions and trends that may affect the region over the next five years. He then highlighted some of the most important social issues affecting education in the South. Dr. Albright's presentation drew responses from three panelists with expertise on three specific social issues: Robert Jackson, coordinator and planner for the Quitman County Development Organization in Marks, Mississippi and founder of the Quitman Teen Information and Pregnancy Prevention Program; Brig Owens, founder of Super Teams, an anti-drug program for high school students; and Dr. Aaron Shirley, a Mississippi pediatrician who directs the Jackson-Hines Comprehensive Health Center.

Dr. Albright began by describing how the Commission on the Future of the South came to stress the inextricable relationship between education and economic prosperity. "It became clear to us," he said, "that one has to attack social problems in order to attack educational problems." Thus what started out as an economic report ended up more as a report on education and social issues.

Key Social Issues

Dr. Albright identified four key social issues that will have an impact on education in the future.

First, as Southerners recognize the connection between economic progress and human resources, schools will be called upon not only to provide quality education but to address health and social problems. This will dictate the formation of new partnerships and better coordination of existing education, health and social welfare resources, and will require the creation of new prevention programs that have an educational base. Second, he said, educators and policy makers must guard against achieving excellence at the expense of equity, and must provide both the funds and commitment needed to ensure that disadvantaged and minority segments of the population receive "the special assistance necessary to include them in the new opportunities for higher education and general economic prosperity."

Recognizing that public schools are likely to have larger numbers of minor-

ity students, it is also vital that the region "facilitate the development and training of more minority teachers and teachers who are sensitive to cultural differences," he said.

Third, the South must address the current problems of dropouts and of an adult illiteracy rate that is growing faster than the rate of young people graduating from high school *or* the general increase in population. The spectre of an "untrainable" work force has severe consequences for the region's ability to achieve prosperity. This will require earlier identification of at-risk students, the reorganization of traditional secondary school counseling, social work and psychological services to emphasize the needs of at-risk students, and the development of alternative vocational programs for potential dropouts.

Fourth, to increase the percentage who go on to college, reforms to help prepare youngsters and "vehicles to encourage and assist youngsters to enter the process" are needed. States must enhance their ability to provide pre-college guidance and counseling by mounting programs to involve parents, emphasizing the importance of the guidance counselor as a monitor and promoter of student potential, and providing programs of guidance and counseling during the early and middle years of schooling — especially for students who have not traditionally been well-served by the schools.

Dr. Albright identified other social issues that will affect the changing environment of the South. These included the need to implement less biased measures of evaluation; the necessity to become more socially responsive to the "new students" of the 1990s (old adults, minority students, non-traditional students); and the need to equalize educational opportunities across school districts.

Brig Owens

Training Peer Leaders to Fight Drugs

Former professional football player Brig Owens described Super Teams, an anti-drug program for high school students which he founded in 1980. Super Teams involves taking high school students away for five days of intense training to become counselors to their peers.

All participants must make three pledges: (1) to abstain from alcohol and/or drug abuse; (2) to maintain a 2.5 grade point average; and (3) for athletes, to improve on last year's athletic record, or for non-athletes, to bring up their overall grade point average.

"The training program emphasizes knowing who you are, learning to feel better about yourself, learning what drugs can do to the family structure, and confidence-building, rather than the pharmacology of drugs or the medical side of the issues," Owens said. Participants learn how to deal with peer pressure, how to utilize community resources, how to counsel others, and related skills needed to provide effective support to their peers.

Prior to the off-site training, meetings are held with administrators from the high schools from which participants are drawn and with parents. Parent meetings are especially important, according to Owens, because participants are likely to return from training prepared to be much more willing to confront family situations involving alcohol or drugs. In a certain sense, he said, "they will never be the same."

On returning to their communities, participants are expected to take their knowledge and apply it in other high school settings, in junior high

schools, and in elementary schools, as well as in their own high schools. Their high schools agree to set aside a student "rap room," in which students can, and with the assurance of confidentiality, seek peer guidance for personal or family problems involving drugs.

Results so far have been very encouraging. High school principals report that drug problems are reduced, participants' grades are up, and even suicide attempts are down. While the professional athletes involved in the training and other aspects of the program help to bridge the gap with the students, Owens believes that "they will listen to their peers first."

Preventing Teen Pregnancy

Robert Jackson described some of the activities of the Quitman Teen Information and Pregnancy Prevention Program (Q-TIPP). Goals of the project include: to prevent a first pregnancy; to ensure that teens who have had a child do not have another; to help pregnant teens obtain the proper prenatal care; to provide parenting instructions; and to involve local families in teenage pregnancy prevention efforts. To further these ends, Q-TIPP disseminates materials and information (one pamphlet discusses myths about teen sexuality and teen pregnancy); conducts workshops for teenagers; conducts workshops for "parents who don't know how to talk to their kids about sex," and has organized local teenagers to produce skits on the subject.

At its founding, Q-TIPP sought to enlist representatives of organizations already involved in teen pregnancy prevention to serve on the Q-TIPP Advisory Council. The Council, consisting of representatives of public agencies and local churches, helps to implement project goals.

One of Q-TIPP's first activities was to try to find out more about the issue of teen pregnancy. "Quitman is a very poor county with no structured recreation programs, so most kids can't afford drugs or other entertainment available in larger and more affluent areas," Jackson explained. Evidence suggests, he says, that most teens get pregnant between the hours of three and five p.m. One of eleven young women gets pregnant between ages 15 and 19; and eight out of every ten of these pregnancies are "unintended." Forty percent end in abortions, 12 percent in miscarriage. Black teenagers are more likely to become pregnant than whites.

Q-TIPP also conducted a survey among local teenagers to find out how sophisticated they were about sex. "We discovered lots of misinformation among lots of kids. For example, 11 percent of those surveyed believed you can't get pregnant the first time!"

While the project has been one of the most successful local community efforts in recent years, more still needs to be done. It is important, Jackson urged, to get school people to "own" part of the project, and he expressed the hope that this could happen in Quitman as well as other counties.

The Value of School-Based Health Clinics

Aaron Shirley, a Mississippi physician who serves as director of the Jackson-Hines Comprehensive Health Center, a community health center serving 25,000 residents of the city of Jackson and rural Hinds County, described some of the health problems identified and corrected through school-based clinics in his area. Of 7,600 children served over an eight year period, for example, some seven percent were diagnosed anemic, four percent had undiagnosed urinary tract infections, three percent had vision impairments,

Aaron Shirley

"Of 7,600 children served over an eight year period, 7 percent were diagnosed as anemic, 4 percent had undiagnosed urinary tract infections, 3 percent had vision impairments, and some 15 percent reported serious conflicts with family members. All these conditions can increase barriers to learning."
AARON SHIRLEY

and some 15 percent reported serious conflicts with family members. "All these conditions," Dr. Shirley pointed out, "can increase barriers to learning. The school-based health clinic is thus contributing to a serious educational purpose as well as filling an important public health need."

Dr. Shirley stressed the value of in-school clinics in teen pregnancy prevention. Some 17 out of 100 female students in the local high schools were becoming pregnant at this project's onset. That figure has now been cut to seven percent, through a program that includes family planning advice and the provision of contraceptives. Those who did bear children were encouraged to stay in school, with considerable success.

Despite the controversial nature of some of the proposed pregnancy prevention activities of school-based clinics, Dr. Shirley maintained that many undiagnosed health problems which have nothing to do with pregnancy will only be found through school-based clinics, and that family planning and contraceptives are effective at achieving an important goal of educators: helping to keep learners in school.

Educators, he urged, should increase their involvement in pregnancy prevention and should not keep their heads in the sand for fear of fundamentalist opposition. For much broader reasons, they should also support the idea of school-based clinics.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps nowhere has the nation's recent call for excellence in education had a greater impact than on the rural and urban schools of the South. Pressured to meet new educational mandates, adapt to changing demographics and technologies, and respond to a host of emerging social issues, many rural and inner-city schools are struggling to cross a widening gulf that separates them from more affluent suburban counterparts.

Yet how the least-advantaged schools respond to these issues will be a critical factor in the progress of education in the South. Rural and urban schools must begin questioning old approaches, rethinking familiar solutions, and developing new alliances and leaders.

As in previous years, the 1986 Continuing Conference sought to assist in this task by promoting frank discussion of the problems, soliciting practical strategies and solutions, and bringing together those committed to these issues. The Southern Education Foundation hopes that these essential ingredients will result in the realization of many of the positive changes described in the preceding pages.

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